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February 18, 1993

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Richard Trumbauer
909 Nelson Place
Piscataway, NJ 08854

Federal Communications Commission
Mass Media Bureau
2025 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

92-266

Gentlemen:

I understand my local cable company, TKR Cable, is demanding another rate increase in February. This is nothing less than legalized extortion. The public has no choice in selecting another cable company and we are forced to pay whatever the cable company demands. The local residents are outraged about the poor quality of service and the high prices we are forced to pay.

In addition to high prices and lousy service, we are now being forced to deal with our local politicians self serving interest...see the attached copy of our newspaper article.

Since TKR Cable is a Monopoly, they can do business in any fashion it pleases. They have no competition and can charge any fee or price they choose. I do not have a choice to subscribe to another cable service who can provide me with a better quality service at a reasonable price.

For instance, TKR sent a service technician to check my service after I was forced to write a letter to our utility commission. He replaced the connections on the outside of the house. This improved the reception but did not even out the sound variation from channel to channel. We have some channels where the sound is lower than normal and when we adjust the sound to watch the program, the commercials come on and blast out your ear drums.

When the technician installed the new connections, he just cut the cables from the splitter box, left it mounted to the house and installed a new splitter box and left all the wires dangling in mid air. This is the type of service TKR provides. I have never had a service technician come to my house without some kind of a problem.

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This type of stupidity only increases their operating costs by requiring another technician to come back and do the job right the second time and maybe a third. TKR is supposedly in the service business but they don't know how to provide the service and don't give a damn about their customers. Their attitude is...we got them all hooked up and they can't go anywhere else so the customers will be forced to put up with all this incompetence and price gouging.

They are now raising my basic cable service to \$21.70 plus \$4.25 each for the two additional sets I have hooked up for a total of \$30.20 (see the enclosed price list). The \$8.50 charge for the two additional sets is 40% of the basic cable price for providing no additional service. When the cable was first installed 10 years ago, the basic price was about \$6.00 which covered all the initial investment for installing the cable system. That system has now been paid for at least twice.

The fact that someone else can watch another program on another TV is immaterial. I can watch one program and record another program using my VCR on the same TV at the same time. Does this mean TKR can have the right to charge me for using my VCR? They tried this a long time ago without success.

Suppose there is only one person in a household and they happen to have three TV sets in three different rooms; that person can only watch one TV at a time and for TKR to use that excuse to justify an additional charge is an outrage and an insult to our intelligence.

The service they provide is nothing different than what the telephone company provides. There is one cable coming into my house and is then split into various extensions, the same as the telephone company service. The phone company at one time also charged an additional fee for each telephone extension I had by claiming it required additional power for each extension. We now know this was all B.S.

ATT also charged us \$300.00 for a telephone plus an additional fee if we wanted a color phone...the same phone we can now buy for \$49.00 because they were forced to enter the free market place. It is very easy to charge outrageous fees and prices when you have a captive customer with a gun pointed at their head...the gun being our legislature which is being bought and paid for by the cable industry.

Cable is not an entertainment medium. It has now become a necessity to keep the people informed as to how our government operates through cable networks such as C-SPAN and CNN plus other educational channels. If TKR wants to charge extra for Movie channels and other special entertainment services I have no objection. Leave the rich people who can afford these services pay for them. I can rent 4 videos a month for less money than TKR wants to charge me for a movie channel. That is my choice and is part of the free enterprise system which forces the cable company to keep their fees down.

Another complaint I have with the cable industry is the companies who sell Sports Channel. These people want to monopolize and control all local broadcasting of sporting events. If you want to watch a local team play, even if the game is a sell out or in another city, you must buy Sports Channel which I feel is unfair because Sports Channel then demands the cable company block out the channel which the local game would have appeared. This forces me to pay my cable company for a blank screen which is absurd.

For example; if I have to pay for the privilege of watching the Mets play, I shouldn't have to watch any commercials and forced to listen to lousy announcers. Before Sports Channel, I could watch the Mets play for FREE on Channel 9 and get better announcers. The Sports Channel is apparently collecting revenues from the advertisers on one end and fees from the cable companies on the other. As a result, I don't watch the Mets anymore and I hope the Mets organization realizes they may be losing some loyal fans because of their greed in obtaining additional revenues from this cable company.

TKR's Public Relations department will use any tactic deemed necessary to justify their actions. The main function of a public relations department is to lie, cheat, deceive and otherwise con the public into believing everything they do is for the benefit of the public.

I don't mind paying a reasonable fee for a service. I do resent being gouged for unreasonable charges and exorbitant prices to protect some executive's Golden Parachute.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Trumbauer". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Richard Trumbauer

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while traveling south in the left lane,
his car swerved over the median and
across the two northbound lanes of traffic,
grazing a telephone pole before hitting the
tree, police said. A doctor stopped his car
and declared him dead at the scene.

Authorities believe, based on a witness's
statement, that Vernon may have fallen
asleep while driving.

RARITAN TOWNSHIP

The township sewer connection fee will
rise \$86 to \$1,886 a year starting Friday.

The one-time fee is paid when a house
is added to the township's sewer system.

The township Utilities Authority also
imposed a 4.3 percent rate increase for
service for the new year.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

PISCATAWAY

1-800-424-0231

The Township Council voted last week
to support four crime bills pending in the
state Legislature. The bills were written
in response to the kidnapping of resident
Gail Shollar from the parking lot of South
Plainfield's Middlesex Mall in early
November.

The four pieces of legislation would:
create a commission to study what the
criminal code says about crimes involving
the threat of injury; set a minimum term
of eight years in prison for first-degree
kidnapping of a victim from a vehicle and
three years for second-degree kidnapping;
make forcible entry into an occupied vehi-
cle a second-degree crime, punishable by
a prison term of five to 10 years, and
make entering an unoccupied vehicle to
wait for a person in order to commit a
crime against the person a second-degree
crime; and require shopping centers, su-
permarkets and theaters to provide for
the safety of their patrons and employees

The Township Council unanimously re-
newed TKR Cable Co.'s television fran-
chise last Tuesday. But there were so
many conditions that TKR said it would
have to raise rates \$10 per month in Pis-
cataway to pay for everything the council
wants.

TKR also said the council is infringing
on its right to broadcast as it sees fit.
"The council is saying they can take our
space and tell us what they want us to put
in it," said TKR's attorney, Thomas Kelly.
"I never heard of an ordinance or resolu-
tion with those types of conditions. They
are unconstitutional."

tural and Heritage Commission.

Two of the withdrawn appointments
were renewed terms for Barbara Sand-
ford and Luther Roberts. The third would
have replaced longtime member and
chairman Stuart Allen with Faith
McPherson.

City Clerk Laddie Wyatt said Mayor
Harold Mitchell requested the withdraw-
als until he can meet with current com-
mission members.

City Council members last Monday ex-
pressed hope that a mayor-council budget
dispute could be settled without a big le-
gal bill. But Donna Vose said a third law-
yer may be needed to represent the coun-
cil minority left out of budget talks.

After four members voted on Dec. 14
for budget amendments over the protests
of three who said the changes weren't
shared with them, Mayor Harold Mitchell
sought and won a judge's order barring
further budget action.

Corporation Counsel Dan Williamson
appointed C. Douglas Reina to represent
Mitchell and Eric Martin Bernstein to
represent the council in the matter, which
comes up for a hearing before Superior
Court Judge Alexander J. Menza on Jan.
25.

The city is planning a 10-day memorial
to Martin Luther King Jr. starting Jan. 9
and concluding on the national holiday
marking his achievements.

More than a dozen organizations and
several churches are presenting programs
both to commemorate King and to re-ex-
amine the challenges he posed to society.

SCOTCH PLAINS

The whereabouts of the tomb of the late
Rev. John Nelligan remain a mystery as a
new hole recently appeared in front of St.
Bartholomew's Church. The footing for a
new bell tower was dug six feet in front
and just slightly to the right of a grave
marker for Rev. Nelligan who founded the
parish and asked to be buried in front of
the combination church/school building
when he died. He was, but the exact site
was lost track of during a blizzard. Now
the parish would like to find him and get
his concrete burial vault out of the way of
new construction. A narthex with an ele-
vator is being added to the front of the
building, and a bell tower is going up near
Nelligan's grave marker.

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additions

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BASIC SERVICE		
WCBS	VABC	WXTV/WNUJ
WTTB	WVOR	WNUB/Travel
WNBC	WPIX	WISN/ETN
TKR Channel 61	WUW/WNYC	THE FAMILY CHANNEL*
MSG II	ACCESS	
WNYW	WNET	<small>*Access Channel in Old Bridge</small>
ADVANTAGE SERVICE		
PREVIEW Guide	C-SPAN	Discovery
OWN	Headline News	AGE
ESPN	AMC/CNBC	Michelodeon
TNT	USA	CTN
QVC	MTV	Nostalgia
THN	Comedy Central	BET*
Weather	Lifetime	<small>*Restriction Area Only</small>
MSG/VH-1	TLCHSN	

Important Information on Programming and Rates.

Dear TKR Customer,

The 1992 Cable Act includes two sections that I consider important enough to bring to your attention at this time.

CARRIAGE OF NON-COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL STATIONS

TKR is required to carry on a full-time basis, the signals of all qualified, non-duplicating, local non-commercial educational television stations requesting carriage, such as WNYC, WNET, WNYE, WNUB, WUW (Portin headend only), and WLYT (Metuchen and Warren headends). As of this writing, the U.S. District Court has postponed compliance with this section for 120 days (on or about April 3, 1993), as they review its constitutionality.

THEFT OF CABLE SERVICE

The willful unauthorized reception of any communication service offered over a cable television system is now a felony. The penalties for a first offense are raised to \$50,000.00 or 2 years in prison, or both, and penalties for subsequent offenses to \$100,000.00 or 5 years in prison, or both. Additionally, unauthorized reception by each separate device is deemed a separate violation.

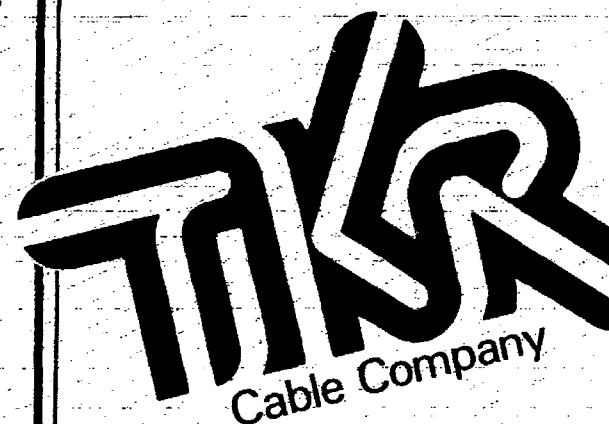
Sincerely,

Charles J. Bartolotta

Charles J. Bartolotta
Regional General Manager

583-0606 548-2400 356-1300

275 Centennial Avenue
Piscataway, NJ 08854



The TKR Guarantee

We promise to provide you, our customer, a cable product that you value, service that exceeds your expectations, and employees who are skilled, responsive, and genuinely committed to satisfying you at every opportunity.

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